

LESSON 2 What SCIENCE does, and does not.

In the first lesson we were listing alleged experiences of spirit, or, if you like, dimensions of Mind. It is possible that some in the class have had one or more of these experiences.

Q: What were they? How much did we agree about the reality of these experiences?

[You could refer to your journals]

In this lesson.....

...we shall be thinking about the ways we employ to investigate different manifestations of Spirit.

The methods of investigation will include various methods used by normal science, together with those used by the law courts.

All these methods help us to find the truth about things.

IN THE NEXT SLIDE WE HAVE TO DO WITH A
BIG DISAGREEMENT

How can we sort out the truth here?

“Sensing Murder” or “Sensing Bullshit”



Jeremy (“Newsboy”) Wells, presenter of NZTV “Eating Media Lunch” presents apparently damning evidence, with which many scientists will agree.

It show us how very important it is for us to sort out what science can or cannot prove.

WATCH

Issues raised in the TV programme [reveal bullets one at a time]

When asked to talk about a (fake) lost one, Debbie repeatedly comes up with supposed information

She avoids being tested by scientists

She is accused of exploiting others' grief for gain.

We already know that there are a multitude of phoney mediums and psychics out there.

So is it as clear as night and day that she is a fake?

The answer is not as simple as it might seem.

In defense of Debbie



Read how [Victor Zammit](#) analyses her achievement in detail. Psychic Sue Nicholson independently came up with most of the same details.

The only non-psychic explanation for it, would be fraudulent conspiracy between Geoff Husson the producer, the psychics, the police, and the TV station. We have to consider how likely this would be.

If you have time look at [this](#).

J. Wells and V. Zammit show us good reasons for disbelieving and believing

Both what Jeremy Wells and Victor Zammit say about Debbie Webber seems to be correct. And it is important in science to give due weight to both sides of the argument. We must allow that both Jeremy and Victor communicate in good faith.

Jeremy Wells is correct that Debbie found non-existent spirits, and more than once.

Victor Zammit is correct that Debbie conveyed 45 accurate pieces of information about the death of the victim, and the name of the murderer. (cont.)

continued..

Much of the information was known only to the police. Therefore, either Debbie is a genuine psychic or there is a fraudulent collaboration between the police, the TV producers and the psychics. Such fraud has not yet been suggested.

In your journal, or in groups, think about the issues that we have to consider in establishing truth about information from psychics.

How can we try and distinguish between true and fraudulent?

We always have to consider which psychics we will trust and how much



Q: How much should you rely on what an 0900 telephone psychic says? Why do people consult them?

Q: How much can we rely on astrologers, and tarot card readers?

The difference between truth and superstition



Q: Make a list of beliefs you think may be superstitions

Our challenge is to discover ways of telling the difference between truth and superstition.

Q: Is Science the only way to discover the truth?

And turning the tables on Science

Which drug or armaments company is paying the scientist?



Have scientists looked at an issue in a balanced way, or are they trying to justify a philosophy or a religious belief?

How good is their data? How controversial are their theories?
How competent are they?

Science is a methodology, not a set of statements of final truth.

Examples of shady science

Shady science and the tobacco industry

A quote: “The article by Enstrom and Kabat (p 369) is the latest in a long series of publications funded by the tobacco industry that report little or no relationship between environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) and disease.¹ The current study has an aura of legitimacy because it is drawn from the American Cancer Society (ACS) Cancer Prevention Study I (CPS-I), a landmark prospective study of the hazards of active smoking,² and because the analyses are based on nearly 40 years of data. Despite these apparent strengths, the study by Enstrom and Kabat is uninformative and its conclusions are exaggerated.

Indeed, the negative conclusions were entirely predictable from the outset because of the flawed way in which exposure to ETS was classified. CPS-I collected no information on ETS exposure other than the smoking status of the spouse.....”

Shady science and the drugs industry

[Plenty of pieces like the following can be found on the internet]

“It's no secret that the pharmaceutical industry trades in junk science. Prescription drug companies distort research, **fudge** measures of drug effectiveness and generally **control** our knowledge of what works in medication. Big Pharma's track record of shady science is a serious problem, especially considering the fact that recent discussions about creating a Comparative-Effectiveness Research Institute currently hold a **place** for prescription drug companies on the organization's board.

The obvious problem is that, to the pharmaceutical industry, "research" is just a code-word for "smart-sounding marketing."

So, who and what can we trust?



How much can we trust the reality of our own experiences?

How much can we trust what other people report about their experiences?

In which situations is science most trustworthy? e.g. medicine; forensic science; drug industry, armaments

The problem

With research into the nature of spirit/mind we find both the bogus and the true

With scientific research in general, we find the same: the bogus and the true.

What strategies do each of us need to employ to help us avoid the bogus and approximate at the true?

....still giving thanks for what Science has achieved

Humanity has invented the methodology of science, and the use of this methodology has ever-increasingly saved humankind from superstition, harmful beliefs and practices, and continues to widen and deepen our understanding of the universe of which we are part.

It hardly needs to prove itself in this regard. But it is a methodology that can be corrupted by fixed ideas and prejudices, and these must always be guarded against.

The methods of the Law Court give us another strategy for getting at the truth



In a law court, lawyers need to find out how much one can rely on a witness. There are many questions: Is the witness a law-abiding person? Stable and mature in personality. A good observer. A good memory. Not saying things to gain in some way. Reasonably well educated.

Q: Can you add to the list?

If the testimony is about experience of spirit...

Even if our supposed jury trusted us, they would investigate how common such alleged experiences are.

If many reliable people report such experiences, that would add to the degree of trust. They might decide to trust that you did have this experience.

The question would still remain, “How do we interpret this experience, how does it fit in with the rest of what we believe we know?”

This is where scientific method comes in.

There are many tools that Science employs

Supposing we are thinking about Near Death

Experiences: people who are using scientific method would...

Collect as many accounts of NDEs as possible

Classify them, but putting like accounts together

Make some theory about the type of experience

Importantly, TEST the theory. “Could have done..” as a theory is useless, because any number of things “could have” happened. - Can one establish the actual likelihood that it *did* happen?

We shouldn't overestimate how much science can help us

Most of the time science and medicine say, “If you do so and so, there is a 26% chance that something will happen.” And the scientific field is now so enormous, that scientists specialise more and more, find it hard to communicate with others, in other specialties, and find it hard to get an overall picture.

Have a look at some of the different kinds of science that we find in **Medicine**.

Science is an ongoing investigation subject to challenge and change. There is disagreement and controversy

“Science versus Religion”



A silly argument really, when you think of the immense differences of belief and approach in countless denominations in Christianity, and an even greater diversity amongst scientists

It is a little like talking about an argument between the Library of Congress, and the Library of the British Museum

Science is methodology, not a belief system



Scientists can be good scientists and be atheist, agnostic, Christian, Moslem, or whatever.

Science doesn't have beliefs and philosophies, doesn't “teach” anything, any more than the Library of Congress as such “teaches” anything.

A good scientist does not start with “the Answer” and then fiddle the facts to get it. Religious people likewise should not do this.

A person who is a “Materialist” ...

Believes that physical matter is the only reality.

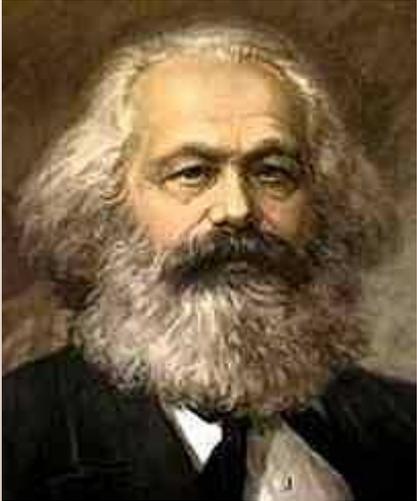
Rejects any conclusion that relies on the existence of supernatural or non-physical reality.

Believes that everything can be explained through physical means, including such seemingly unphysical phenomena such as thought, emotions, and will.

We could argue that the Materialist prescribes the conclusions, and thus precludes the research

We not talking about people who are **materialistic and greedy!**

“Materialism” is belief, not proved fact



The belief is that Mind is produced by brains, brains are composed of cells, which are composed of molecules, composed of atoms, composed of subatomic particles, which are **forms of energy**.

But what is **energy**? We can describe what energy does, but **not what it is**. No one knows for sure what energy is.

We can just as well say that it is “Mind” or “Matter” / That it is “dead” or that it is “alive.”

[Picture is of Karl Marx who wrote of Dialectical Materialism.]

***From A Scientist's Guide to the Spiritual* by John Joseph Petrovic page 9**

[With regard to the philosophy of Materialism:] Given that matter and energy are essentially the same thing, let's just talk about energy. What is energy? My college freshman physics book grandly stated that "energy is the ability to do work". But this definition is completely off the mark. It says nothing about what energy is, only about what energy does.

Science knows about the kinds of things that kinetic energy, potential energy, and electromagnetic energy can do. But what is energy? What is the essence of energy, the truth of energy? In fact, no scientist in the world can answer this simple question

Materialism therefore is a philosophical opinion, not a scientific fact.

[Download Petrovic and read](#)